



# News Release

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## Corps releases Smith Island environmental study for public comment

**Baltimore** – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, released for public review today a feasibility report on projects that could help restore and create submerged aquatic vegetation and salt marsh habitat at Smith Island. The report contains conclusions and recommendations from a 2 ½-year study called the Smith Island, Md., Environmental Restoration and Protection Study. The 30-day public review and comment period extends through April 15, 2001.

The study examines numerous Smith Island water resources problems with erosion as a common factor. The report recommends restoration of Back Cove and Fog Point Cove using stone breakwaters and backfill. It also proposes using breakwaters and backfill to protect the western shoreline of the Martin Wildlife Refuge from the northern jetty near Ewell to Fog Point. All three projects will protect or create marsh habitat that will promote SAV growth.

Smith Island is the last continuously inhabited remote island in the Maryland waters of the Chesapeake Bay. It is home to a unique culture of watermen, descendants of the original inhabitants who settled there 350 years ago. The swiftly eroding shorelines of the island endanger the populated areas, cause shoaling in the navigation channels, decrease protection from wave energy and degrade SAV beds. The island is located 12 miles west of Crisfield, Md., and 95 miles south of Baltimore.

The study originally included erosion protection at Tylerton and navigation at Rhodes Point, also. During its course, these two elements were removed from this study and are being carried forward separately.

The report is available from the Baltimore District, at certain local libraries, and on the District website at <http://www.nab.usace.army.mil/projects/civil.htm>. Comments or requests should be submitted in writing to the attention of Daniel M. Bierly, Planning Division, and mailed to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, P.O. Box 1715, Baltimore, Md. 21203-1715; or sent by fax to 410-962-4698; or e-mailed to [daniel.m.bierly@usace.army.mil](mailto:daniel.m.bierly@usace.army.mil)

All comments received by the Corps will be considered and addressed in the final report, scheduled to be issued in May 2001.